

would pray: Lord save their souls, I am going to destroy their bodies. What an admirable Christian! How like our Savior who directed so large a share of his ministry to saving the bodies as well as the souls of men. Let us by all means make gun practice a part of the Sunday-school training, so that our children will be certain to become better soldiers as they become better Christians.

The Sunday School

"TELL HOW YOU TEACH YOUR BIBLE CLASS"

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If any object to the personal pronouns in what I have to say, the blame must be laid upon the editor. I shall write frankly upon it, phrased exactly as it was given to me. I presume I have been asked to write upon it because I have a Bible class of over fifty young men. Let me say at the outset that it is a very democratic class. We are of various ages and sizes, and represent twenty or thirty lines of business—almost as many as were represented in the famous Sixth Massachusetts Regiment. A part are students. Some, on the other hand, have had very few advantages, social or educational. I speak of this as showing that some methods may be wise with this class that would not necessarily be so with a class of another kind.

As a result of teaching young men for over twenty-five years, I would make the following suggestions as among the things I try ever to keep in mind:—

1. *Always be present* unless detained by some important reason, a reason that your class will feel is a good one. No one has yet been able to teach a Bible class when absent. If you must be away, send a letter to show your interest, and secure a substitute. You cannot expect your scholars to be regular in attendance if you are irregular. They will take their example from you.

2. I try to keep ever clearly in mind the *great aim* of Bible class teaching; namely, to lead all to Jesus Christ, and then to inspire them with the thought of noble service for him. All history, geography, story must be tributary to this; unless we have the highest ideals, the result will be very meager.

3. I try to be *faithful in preparation*, remembering not only the fearful responsibility, but also the unspeakable privilege of molding young men for the life that now is and for that which is to come. The most solemn and also the happiest hour of all the week is the one in which we gather around the Book of God. I think the average layman should spend at least five hours in preparation.

4. I always *write out the questions*, and the heads of what I wish to say. There is nothing more demoralizing to a class of bright young men than for the teacher to be "fumbling around" to find the place. They want things quick, sharp, prompt. A person ought to be able to make questions for

his own class better than a stranger can do it for him.

5. I try *never to do the same thing twice alike*. It adds greatly to the interest to have a variety. God made the world on this plan. Some ministers have very short pastorates because they tread right along in the same old paths till the congregation know just what is coming, and the truth does not make its proper impression. In a large class there are persons of various peculiarities, and what touches one does not touch another. Get out of the ruts, even if you do go over rougher ground sometimes. It is safer than to go to sleep. The old story of the two boys at family prayers contains a truth for all. One of them went to sleep, and woke up with a start, to be comforted by his brother, who said, "It's all right; father has got only to the Jews."

6. As a part of this plan, I have *no regular order of asking questions*. I sometimes begin in one place in the class, and sometimes in another. In going around, if a hard question come to one who you feel may not be able to answer it, and who will be thereby embarrassed, it is easy enough to put in another question or ask the difficult question of all, and see how many answers you can get; or "*plump it*" straight at some one you know will be glad to answer, as if you had been saving it for him all the lesson. It is sometimes said that we should never put a question that can be answered by "yes" or "no." Theoretically that may be all right and good for a general truth. But I would rather get only that answer at first out of a diffident young man, and have him feel happy when he goes home because he has taken some part, than to have him silent.

7. *Be cheerful*. A long faced Christian, if such a term be not a contradiction, ought never to be asked to teach a Bible class. I do not believe there are either icebergs or fogs in heaven, and there is no place for them personified in the Sunday-school. The person who goes thro life in a "hang dog way" as tho he were apologizing to the Almighty for being in the world at all, can never teach young men. He cannot attract; he must repel. It is not necessary to be flippant or frivolous, which is the other extreme. A sunny cheerfulness is the spirit of the gospel.

8. *Be earnest*. If there be anything that ought to arouse all that is in us, it is the thought of molding human souls by the presentation of the gospel. How the angels around the throne would hasten here, if only they could have the opportunity that God gives to us! And how short time is, and how long eternity will be! All we can do to save young men we must do now. There will be ample time to do other things by and by, but it will then be too late to "rescue the perishing." There is not the slightest chance for any one to succeed in anything in the rush of the closing years of this century, unless he be dead in earnest; and this general truth is nowhere more true

than in the work of the Sunday-school. The young can never take any interest in the sleepy teacher. As has been said many times, it is not the twang of the string, but the arrow, that does the execution; but the arrow will not be likely to get far without some snap.

(Continued next week)

Punctuality

Not on the part of the scholar. It is necessary that the teacher is in his place when the signal is given to open the school.

"What can I do with my teachers?" asked the superintendent of one of our departments recently. "Many of them are older than I, and I dislike to dictate to them, but some of them remain in church talking until after the opening prayer, Sunday after Sunday. Then they saunter into their classes without the slightest concern."

The answer to her, and to every superintendent is, insist—tactfully and courteously, of course, but, nevertheless, firmly—that every teacher make it a rule to be present at the opening of the school unless unavoidably detained. You can then urge punctuality on the part of the scholars. In some schools a record is kept of the punctuality of both teachers and pupils. In others, the doors are fastened during the reading of the scripture and prayer, and none are allowed to enter during this part of the service.

The Model Sunday School Teachers

They are the under-pastors of the church, preparing the young for its service and instructing them in its doctrines. They are officers of the school, sharing with the superintendent in its responsibilities and discipline. They are co-workers with the home, enforcing its authority and supplementing its rightful teaching. They are both teachers and trainers of the scholars, informing their minds and molding their lives.

The lives of Sunday-school teachers outweigh their lessons, making a personal as well as a professional preparation peculiarly needful. The former, by grace of Jesus Christ, is free to all; the latter comes, through study and experience, to every one who persistently seeks it. By a little systematic study the sincere Sunday-school teacher may largely increase his power.

Spiritually.—The Sunday-school teacher needs, most of all, a *definite Christian experience*. He must *know*, experimentally, the truth he teaches. He who is himself unconverted cannot convert another. He may know little or much else, but this one thing he *must* know—that Jesus Christ is his *personal Savior*.

Socially.—He needs to cultivate his social powers as a means to personal influence. Piety is not always magnetic. There are teachers lacking tact and social friendliness who repel their scholars.

As to Knowledge.—The teacher must know what to teach. His one text book must be the Bible, with its divine commentator, the Holy Spirit. He must study its composition, geography, history, doctrines.